DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 354 976 JC 930 156

AUTHOR Angle, Nancy; And Others
TITLE The Changing Student Demography of Cerritos College. Topical Paper Series, Issue 2, Fall 1992.
INSTITUTION Cerritos Coll., Norwalk, Calif.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Planning; College Role; Community Colleges; Cultural Pluralism; Curriculum Development; Demography; Economically Disadvantaged; Educational Quality; English (Second Language); *Enrollment Trends; Faculty Recruitment; Institutional Characteristics; Sociocultural Patterns; *Student Characteristics; Two Year Colleges; *Two Year College Students
IDENTIFIERS Cerritos College CA

ABSTRACT

The rapidly changing demographic profile of students at Cerritos College (CC) in Norwalk, California, presents a substantial challenge for the college as it seeks to simultaneously provide transfer education and job skills training, and to maintain comprehensiveness, quality, and access. A study was undertaken of the changing student population at CC to address the needs for institutional changes, the desirability of curriculum modifications, and the impact on faculty and staff. Study findings included the following: (1) from fall 1982 to fall 1991, the number of students under 21 years of age declined from 35.1% to 31.7%, while the 35-49 age group increased by 1.5% during this same period; (2) in fall 1991, 52.8% of the CC student body was comprised of ethnic minorities, compared with only 30% of the opening enrollment in fall 1980; (3) in spring 1991, a student survey indicated an ethnic distribution of 42.6% Latino, 25.7% Caucasian, 16.3% Asian, 7% Black/African American, and 6.6% Filipino; (4) analysis of local high school feeder districts revealed higher percentages of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students than the state average, suggesting that CC will experience a growing demand for English-as-a-Second-Language courses; (5) socioeconomic status of high school seniors' parents from CC's feeder districts fell below the median statewide level, suggesting a likely growth in enrollment among financially disadvantaged students; and (6) given the increased tuition at state universities, enrollment is likely to experience steady growth at CC, especially among financially disadvantaged students. Suggestions for dealing with the changing student demographics are included. (PAA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED354976

CERRITOS
COLLEGE
11110 Alondra Blvd.
Norwalk, CA 90650

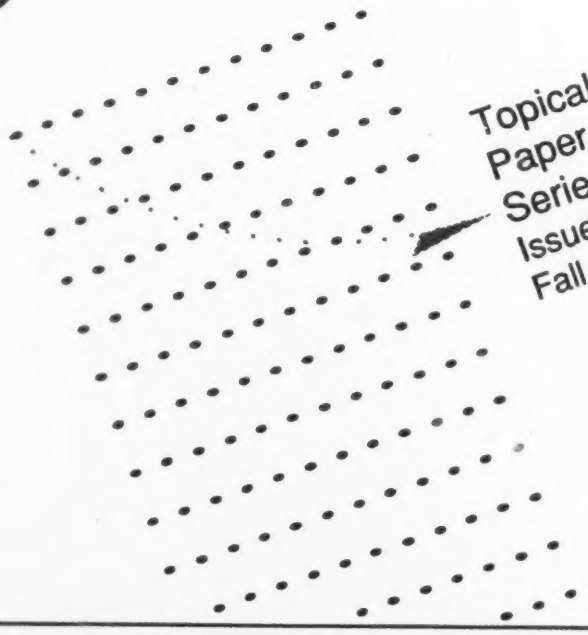
The Changing Student Demography of Cerritos College

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



Topical Paper Series
Issue 2
Fall 1992

JC930156

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Dennis-Rounds

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRIMARY AUTHORS

Nancy Angle
Professor,
Mathematics Department

Jan Dennis-Rounds
Administrative Dean,
Educational Support Services

Jim Fillpot
Research Assistant,
Research & Development

Frank Gaik
Assistant Professor,
English Department

EDITORIAL BOARD

Nancy Angle
Professor,
Mathematics Department

Jan Dennis-Rounds
Administrative Dean,
Educational Support Services

Frank Gaik
Assistant Professor,
English Department

Adolph Johnson
Dean,
Academic Affairs

Dick McGrath
President,
Faculty Senate

Bob Silverman
Vice-President,
Instructional Services

CERRITOS COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mr. Joseph O. Stits,
President

Mr. Mark Durant,
Vice-President

Mr. Rick D. Sanchez,
Secretary

Dr. Theodore Edmiston,
Member

Ms. Mary Loya,
Member

Mr. John Moore,
Member

Dr. Ada Steenhoek,
Member

Mr. Mazen Nabulsi,
Student Representative

The Changing Student Demography of Cerritos College

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to stimulate discussion about demographic changes occurring at Cerritos College and in the regional area. In this discussion several questions need to be addressed, including:

1) What institutional changes, if any, must be made in order to meet the needs of these changing populations?

2) What curriculum, if any, must be modified or developed to meet the needs of all students at Cerritos College?

3) What is the impact of the changing demographics on existing faculty, staff, and future hires at Cerritos College?

Introduction

As a public, open-access community college located in a highly dynamic region, Cerritos College is confronted with a substantial challenge: how do we maintain comprehensiveness, quality, and access? Dale Parnell, past president of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), terms this challenge "the persistent tension," inherent in the community college system of education today.

At Cerritos College we strive to meet the diverse needs of our students and community. We are simultaneously a transfer institution and a provider of up-to-date job skills training. We remediate, guide, and tutor. We also serve as a community hub for "non-academic" pursuits and interests. In assuming these multiple roles, a primary consideration is the rapidly changing demographic profile of the College's constituency.

Age Profile

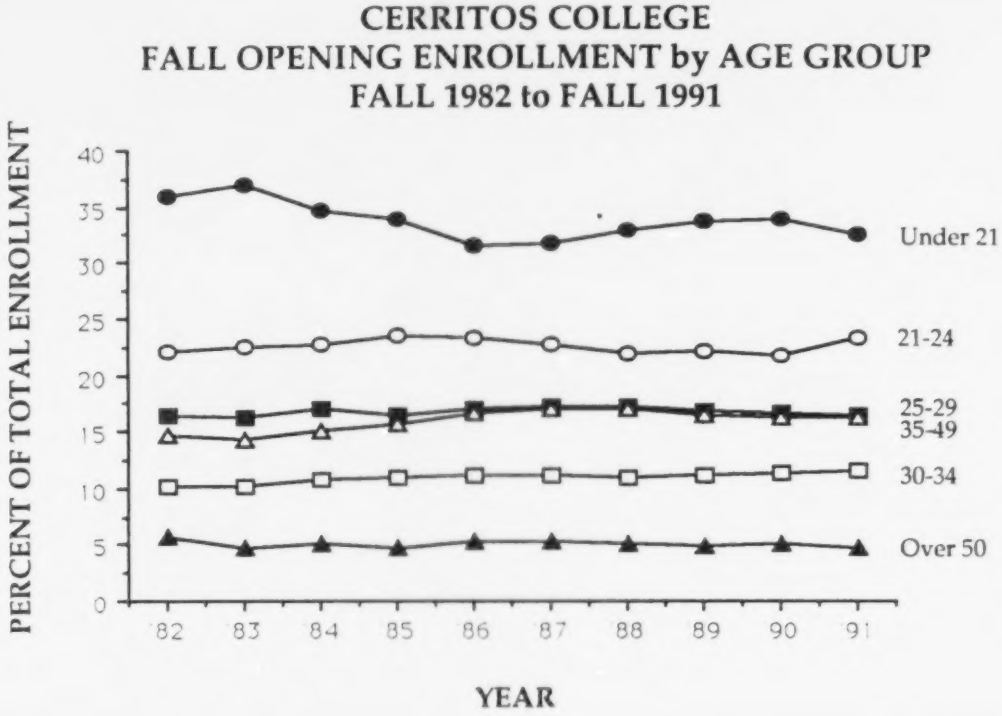
Over the past ten years, the student body of Cerritos College has reflected the gradual decrease of the traditional college age student. In the Fall 1982 semester, more than one-third (35.1%) of the students enrolled at Cerritos were under 21 years of age. By Fall 1991, this age group constituted 31.7% of the enrollees. The 3.4% difference represents the largest ten-year decline among any of the age groups examined. The only other age group to experience a decline was the over 50 age group. In the Fall 1982 semester, 4.8% of the students enrolled at Cerritos were over 50 years of age; ten years later, this figure declined to 4.0%.

While the raw number count of both the under-21 and the over-50 populations did increase, their lower percentages are attributable to the enrollment increases among the 21 to 49 year-old population, especially among 30-49 year-olds. From the Fall 1982 to the Fall 1991 semester, the 35-49 age group increased by 1.5% and the 30-34 year-old age group by 1.4%. The ten-year change in total student body percentage representation by age group is depicted in Figure 1.

Ethnic Profile

The Fall 1991 semester marked the first time in Cerritos College's 35-year history that the largest single ethnic group on campus was <u>not</u> Caucasian. In this semester Latinos comprised slightly less than 32% of Cerritos' total enrollment (7,400 students). Sociologists use the term "new majority" to refer to all minority ethnic groups combined. In Fall 1991, new majority students accounted for 52.8% of the total opening enrollment student body. This represents a 76% increase

Figure 1



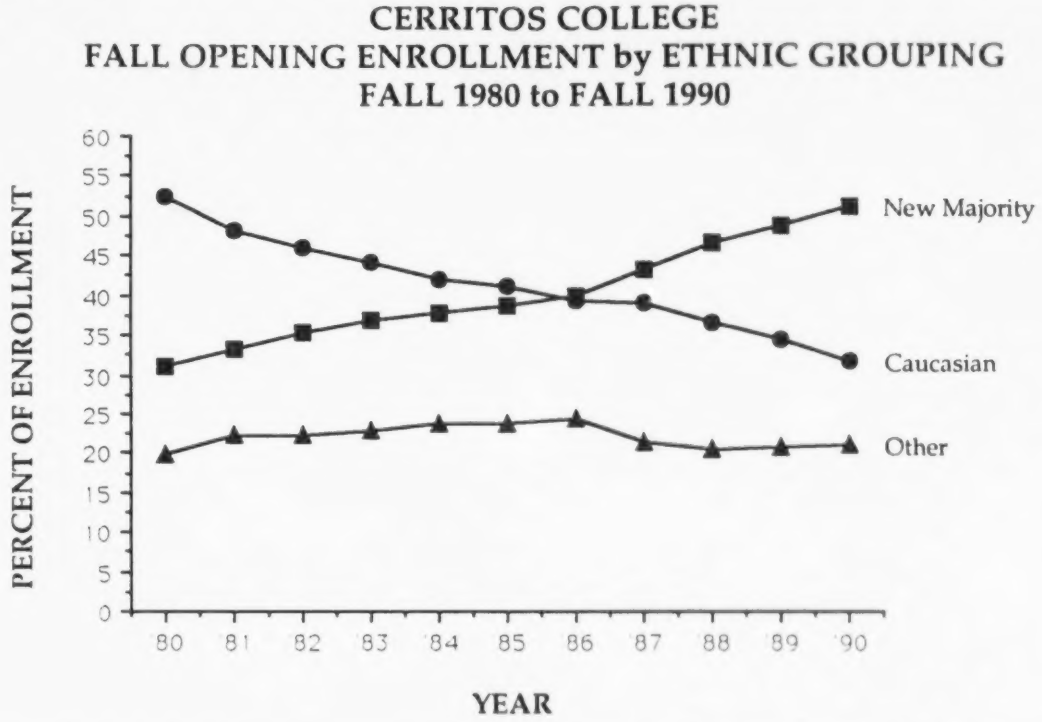
from Fall 1980, when new majority students represented 30.0% of the opening enrollment. Changes in the new majority, Caucasian and "Other" student enrollments over the past ten years are depicted in Figure 2.

An examination of elementary and secondary schools in Los Angeles County and in Cerritos College's own service area (ABC Unified School District, Bellflower Unified School District, Downey Unified School District, and Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District) provides some data that may impact Cerritos College's future demographic composition.

Public school enrollment in Los Angeles County shows steady upward growth. The California State Department of Finance projected a 1989-90 enrollment of approximately 1.37 million in Los Angeles County public schools. By the 1994-95 academic school year, this figure is expected to grow to approximately 1.57 million, representing a 14.5% increase over the next five years. However, the Cerritos College service area is expected to remain relatively stable. Over the next five years, enrollment in area public schools is expected to rise slightly, hovering around 64,000, not a dramatic change. However, the demographic make-up of those students is quite likely to change.

Slightly over ten years ago, Los Angeles County schools began to experience greater ethnic minority than Caucasian student enrollment counts. By the 1987-88 school year, new majority enrollment accounted for 70% of Los Angeles County's K-12 school enrollment. In that academic year, the four school districts in Cerritos College's service area did not exhibit similar ethnic distribution patterns. However, ethnic shifts in recent years are bringing Cerritos College's service area closer to the county-wide

Figure 2



ethnic distribution. Most of the school districts are predominantly Caucasian, but ethnic minorities make up an increasing percentage of the total student enrollment.

Data from the 1989-90 academic school year reflects changes in ethnic enrollment patterns (Table 1). The four school districts in the Cerritos service area provided approximately 30% of our students in the Fall 1990 semester. Minority student enrollment increased between 4 and 9% in this two-year period. Although ethnic minority enrollment in the Cerritos College service area still falls short of the 73.9% county-wide figure, it has increased over the past two years, accelerating at a faster pace during this period than the county-wide figure. Long-term demographic trends in feeder school districts indicate a continued increase in the percentage of new majority students in the Cerritos College service area. Cerritos College can expect a future ethnic enrollment distribution approximating current elementary and secondary education distributions in the area.

An examination of the major ethnic groups traditionally tracked at Cerritos College reveals shifts in the new majority enrollment over the past five years. However, these figures may not tell the whole story. Previous data-gathering methods limited the scope of ethnic information to gross categorizations. Because of this, almost twenty percent of the students either chose (or by default were placed in) the "Other/No Response" category each semester. When presented with applicable response categories, students can provide more specific ethnic information.

The Spring 1991 Matriculation Student Satisfaction Survey randomly sampled over 60 courses in various departments campus-wide. It broke general ethnic

Table 1

CERRITOS COLLEGE SERVICE AREA
MINORITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY SCHOOL DISTRICT
1987-88 to 1989-90

SCHOOL DISTRICT	1987-88	1989-90	Change	% of Cerritos College's Total Fall '90 Enrollment
ABC Unified	62.9%	68.2%	+ 5.3%	10.51%
Bellflower Unified	34.1	39.5	+ 5.4	3.98
Downey Unified	45.2	54.2	+ 9.0	7.11
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified	60.6	64.6	+ 4.0	6.98

categories into more refined sub-groups than the standard College application, providing students with expanded choices. This proved especially useful in collecting data on Asian and Latino students. Given the wide range of response options, only two percent of the respondents fell into an "Unknown/ Decline to State" catch-all category. Under this expanded ethnic response scheme, a more accurate picture of ethnic distribution became available. Slightly over one-quarter (25.7%) of the students surveyed were Caucasian. Latino students accounted for 42.6% of the students surveyed. The percentage of Asian students rose to 16.3%. Black/African-American and Filipino ethnic groups represented 7.0% and 6.6%, respectively. The number of responses received (1,241) places these results well within a 99% confidence interval for generalization to the total Cerritos College student body population.

These findings suggest that, when the amount of missing or unknown ethnic data is significantly controlled for and reduced, the actual percentage of new majority students enrolled at Cerritos College may account for approximately three-fourths of the total student body population.

English Proficiency

The ethnic diversity of the Cerritos College service area presents both challenges and opportunities. Ethnic diversity is one of the College's strongest features. The inclusion of many heritages, cultures, backgrounds and nationalities has required that we provide classroom instruction in English to many students with limited familiarity with and proficiency in the language. An examination of California Assessment Program (CAP) background factors at the state, county, and feeder school district levels provides a better measure of the scope of this challenge.

At the state level, seven percent (7%) of the students in California's 1989-90 high school senior class were designated as possessing limited English communication skills. This figure demonstrates a recent increase in the number of limited English proficient (LEP) students in California secondary

schools. Two years ago, only 5.2% of twelfth grade students statewide were classified as LEP.

In 1989-90, 8.7% of all Los AngelesCounty high school seniors possessed limited English communication skills. Local feeder school districts' comparable figures are as follows:

ABC	10.0%
Bellflower	4.2
Downey	8.3
Norwalk-La Mirada	9.8

Figures and trends at the third, sixth, and eighth grade levels may project a greater increase in the number of LEP students in the future. In terms of both sheer volume and percent change, Los Angeles County schools can continue to expect a greater number of LEP students than their statewide counterparts.

Similar to 12th grade LEP findings, third, sixth, and eighth grade classes in the four unified school districts in the Cerritos College service area all placed high on statewide LEP percentile ranking. At all grade levels in every feeder school district, the percentage of students classified as limited English proficient was above the statewide median. At the third grade level, the percentage of limited English proficient students ranged from a low of 6.9% (Bellflower USD) to a high of 29.8% (ABC Unified School District) of the total student population. Sixth grade LEP percentages were similar, ranging from a low of 4.2% (Bellflower USD) to a high of 17.6% (ABC USD).

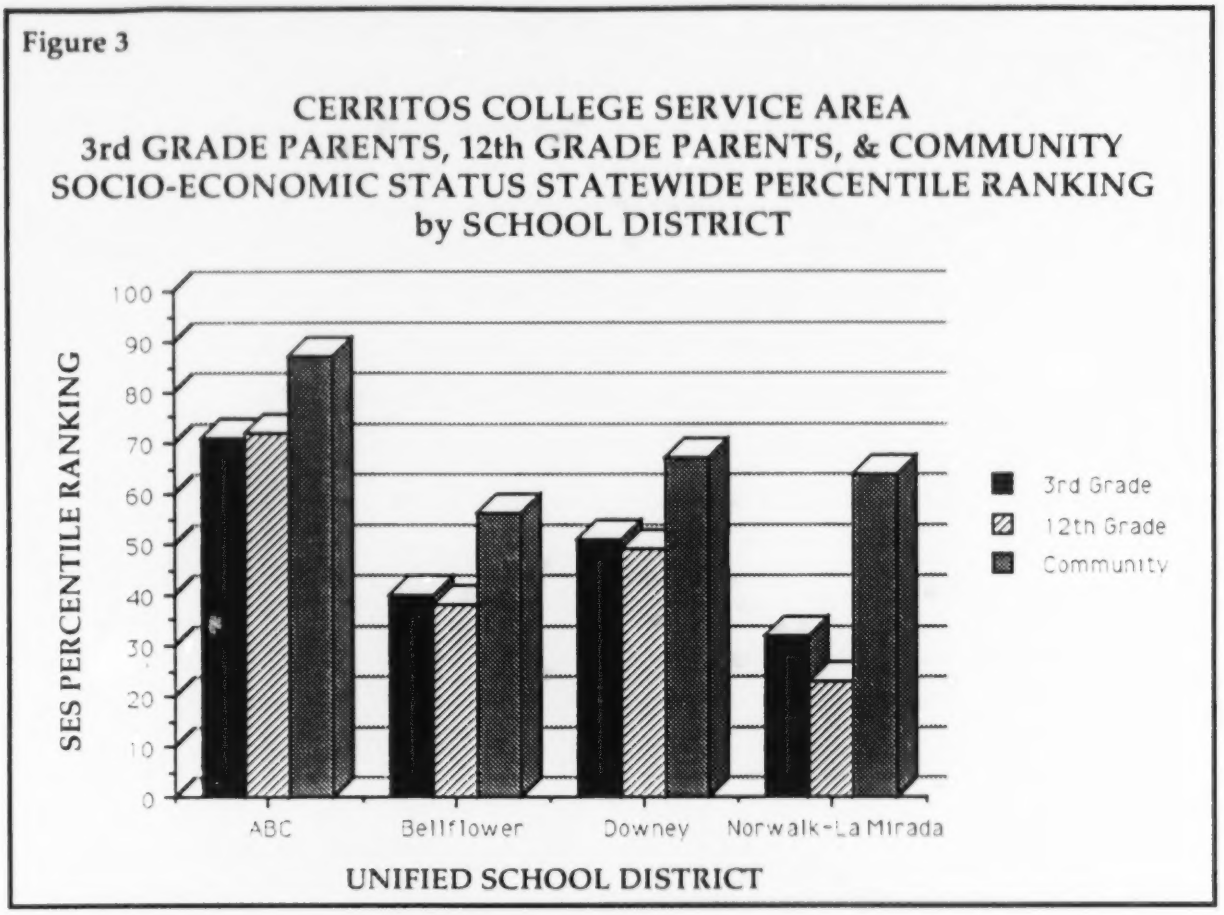
It is apparent from this data that the growth in enrollment of LEP students is greater at the lower grade levels than at the higher grade levels. However, it is expected that these younger students will have more time in which the schools and society can help them improve their English proficiency. In addition, it is unknown what proportion of these students will complete school, remain in the area, or choose to attend Cerritos College. A conservative estimate indicated that 3.0% of Cerritos' Fall 1991 student body were enrolled in ESL courses. If the English proficiency of second-language students is not established at the elementary and secondary educational levels, Cerritos College may be enrolling greater numbers of students with English deficiencies within the next ten years, compared to the percentage that is currently enrolled.

Based upon the increase of LEP students, it seems likely that Cerritos College can expect some increase in the number of students with limited English communication skills. Increasingly, teachers will be addressing multilingual, not bilingual, classrooms.

Socioeconomic Status

In the future, Cerritos College may also be called upon to provide educational programs and transfer opportunities to a larger number of financially disadvantaged students. The socio- economic status (SES) of 1989-90 high school seniors' parents in the Bellflower (38th percentile statewide rank), Downey (49th percentile), and Norwalk-La Mirada (23rd percentile) Unified School Districts all fell below the median statewide socioeconomic status level. ABC USD ranked at the 72nd percentile statewide. However, these percentile rankings represent a four-year increase in the statewide percentile ranking of high school seniors' parental SES in the Bellflower (+3 percent) and Downey (+3 percent) Unified School Districts. Over this same four-year period, statewide percentile ranking of high school seniors' parental SES in the Norwalk-La Mirada and ABC Unified School Districts demonstrated no change and a five percent decrease, respectively. Comparisons also reveal that the SES of

Figure 3



parents of twelfth graders throughout the Cerritos College service area is lower than the SES of the average community resident (Fig. 3).

Changes in the state economy have historically affected the types of students enrolling at Cerritos College, including differing SES backgrounds. With increasing CSU and UC tuition fees (which have increased between 24% and 40%), the trend toward limited economic resources among area parents might limit the availability of financial support to students interested in attending four-year institutions. As a viable educational alternative, Cerritos College can expect an increase in enrollment, bolstered by students who are attracted to the College's low cost, and financial and transfer assistance resources. The shortage of available courses at four-year institutions, brought about by economic constraints and the state's current budget crisis, may also increase the number of "reverse transfer" students at Cerritos.

Conclusions

Southern California, and Los Angeles County in particular, is a region in transition, impacted by many forces, both internal and external. Changes will surely occur, but predicting the direction and magnitude of those changes is risky business. Some "conclusions" drawn from data presented in this paper are listed below, in no particular order. They are best-guess hypotheses about how the Cerritos College community is likely to change, and how it may need to change over the next few years.

- Because our student body, which is already one of the most diverse in the country, will continue to change demographically, it will be increasingly important that we foster and encourage a spirit of multicultural awareness and cooperation on campus. Our students will be part of a society in which 85% of those entering the workforce will be from traditionally underrepresented groups. Their education must prepare them to live and work in such a highly diverse society.

- We must maintain our commitment to being a student-centered institution. We will need to monitor our curriculum, so that we can continue, and refine, those programs, that are serving the needs of our students, as well as create new programs when necessary.

- We must be careful not to assume that a more diverse student population necessarily will mean a more educationally deprived population. Nevertheless, programs, courses, and services that assist underprepared students must be supported, including those successful programs already in place.

- The demographic makeup of staff and faculty may change more slowly than that of the student body. The support staff probably reflects the ethnic diversity of the college's geographic area more closely than the faculty, and will tend to change more rapidly. Faculty on the other hand tend to commute from a greater distance and, once tenured, stay with the district for their career. As we replace long-term faculty who are retiring, it will be imperative for the college to continue its current emphasis on hiring a diverse, highly-qualified faculty. The college must provide increased education, for both faculty and staff, about cultural differences and values.

- Because we are truly a *community* college, we must remain accessible to the community and aware of its needs. Cerritos College can be a true center for community education, and can be a force for building a sense of community in an often fragmented world.

- When the new Century Freeway is completed, it is likely that Cerritos College (situated at the intersection of several freeways) will serve more students commuting from outside the district boundaries. Student demographics may be influenced more strongly by regional trends than by local factors.

Sources: California Assessment Program (CAP), "1989-90 Direct Writing Assessment Test Score Summary," California State Department of Education.

California Assessment Program (CAP) , "1989-90 Four Year School and District Summary," California State Department of Education.

California Assessment Program (CAP), "1989-90 Survey of Academic Skills: Grade 12," California State Department of Education.

California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) 1986 - 1990, California State Department of Education.

Cerritos College Computer Services AR810-R STAT Reports, Fall 1982 - Fall 1991.

Cerritos College Matriculation databases, Files IR101B.863 thru IR101B.911.

Cerritos College Matriculation Student Satisfaction Survey, Spring 1991.

"The Condition of Public Education in Los Angeles County, 1989-90 & 1990-91," Annual Statistical Review, Los Angeles County Department of Education.

Donnelley Marketing Information Systems, "American Profile: Market Facts," Estimates June 4, 1991.

Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), Report 35, June 7, 1985.

1980 U.S. Census of Population for Cerritos Community College District.